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SUBJECT: Anjouan Authorities Concerned About Security

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Anjouan president Toybou fears former Bacar loyalists will take action once African Union forces withdraw from his island. He has asked the Union government to seek to extend the mandate of the Tanzanian forces and to train a new police force. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Anjouan Island President (governor) Moussa Toybou told Comoros Officer October 20 that he fears Bacar loyalists will act to destabilize the island after African Union (AU) forces withdraw next month. Elements of the Union Army and Gendarmerie are stationed in Anjouan, Toybou said, but in insufficient numbers. He is recruiting a new police force, but he says the Union police does not have the resources to train them, nor are the Tanzanian or Sudanese AU forces conducting training (Note: Post previously reported that AU forces would train new security personnel in Anjouan, based on our briefings. This apparently never happened. End Note).

¶3. (SBU) Toybou alleged that Bacar loyalists remain in Anjouan, members of his informal militia who neither fled nor were arrested. Over 20 fled with Bacar to Mayotte in March and were relocated to Reunion. An additional dozen of his officials escaped Anjouan in July and fled to Mayotte - Toybou believes these members of Bacar's regime in Mayotte are in contact with allies on the island. Bodyguards and tight security procedures around the island president indicate he genuinely believes this threat. Replying to a question, Toybou said the Union government downplays his fears and says they do not have the resources to do more to secure Anjouan (Comment: Indeed, our contacts in Moroni do not appear to be worried. End Comment.)

¶4. (SBU) To further complicate matters, over 50 military and civilian Bacar loyalists are in prison in Grande Comore. Religious leaders in Anjouan have demanded that President Sambu release them and the Presidents advisors reportedly agree, noting Sambu "hopes to retire to Anjouan some day." A business contact who deals with the military reported that Sambu indeed gave the order to release these prisoners, but Grande Comoran military officers refused to free "the enemy" and let them rejoin their ranks. At present, these 50 Anjouanese remain in prison. Resentment over this in Anjouan and broken Union promises to rebuild the island after order was restored in March further weaken Toybou's position.

¶5. (SBU) Toybou said the Anjouanese population shares his fears and does not want to see the Tanzanians leave - in fact he said he made an official request to the Union government to prolong the AU deployment in Anjouan. He reported that the response he received was that the AU does not have the budget to maintain the force beyond November.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The Anjouanese that Comoros Officer spoke to were disappointed by lack of Union effort to rebuild the island after Bacar's departure; President Sambu's popularity peaked in June, then steadily declined. Abysmal school exam (BAC) results, with 10 percent passing, remind Anjouanese how much their island is neglected. It is hard to assess if Toybou's fears are justified, but they are no doubt genuine: he is afraid. END COMMENT.

MARQUARDT